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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/316,699	05/21/1999	WILLIAM J. DALLY	AV199-01	8189

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EXAMINER

LY, ANH VU H

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2667

DATE MAILED: 02/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/316,699

Applicant(s)

DALLY ET AL.

Examiner

Anh-Vu H Ly

Art Unit

2667

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 and 30-53 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 and 30-53 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 May 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. Figure 4 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated, described in the specification on page 7, lines 15-17, as long as applicant acknowledged such routers had already existed before the filing of the application. See MPEP § 608.02(g). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-4, 8-19, 23-34, 36-42, and 44-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Kadambi et al (US Pub No. 2002/0093974 A1) in view of Ben-Michael et al (EP O 886454A2) and further in view of Brant et al (US Patent No. 5,805,787). Hereinafter, referred to as Kadambi, Ben-Michael and Brant.

With respect to claims 1, 16, 31, 40, and 46-49, Kadambi discloses (page 4, paragraphs 44-45, page 19, paragraphs 217-221, and Fig. 2) that the common buffer memory pool or CBP 50 is first level high speed SRAM memory, packet memory cache, for storing the received data packets and considered as on-chip data memory (a first set of rapidly accessible buffers,

Art Unit: 2667

operating as a cache, which store information units received at an input link). Further, Kadambi discloses that global memory buffer pool or GBP 60 acts as a second level memory and is located off-chip. Since, the GBP 60 is an off-chip memory therefore it is slower to access than the CBP 50 (a second set of buffers for the information units that are accessed more slowly than the first set). Kadambi does not disclose the information units from the first set of buffers being evicted to second set of buffers. Ben-Michael discloses in Fig. 7, a block diagram illustrating on-chip memory and off-chip memory for storing data packets in a network switch or router, wherein, the data packets being evicted from the on-chip memory to the off-chip memory when the on-chip memory is full. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the feature of storing the data packets in the on-chip memory and transferring the data packets to the off-chip memory when the on-chip memory is full in Kadambi's system, as suggested by Ben-Michael, to prevent the received data packets from being dropped when the on-chip memory of a router and/or switch is full. Kadambi does not disclose the eviction being based on an algorithm other than order of receipt in the first buffer. Brant discloses (col. 8 lines 50-54) an eviction algorithm other than the order of receipt such as random, revolving, least recently used or fastest fit algorithm. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include an eviction algorithm such as least recently used or fastest fit algorithm in Kadambi's system, as suggested by Brant, to efficiently manage the information units.

With respect to claims 2, 17, and 32 Kadambi discloses in Fig. 1, the forwarding element 10 is located on an IC chip (router processing is implemented on one or more router integrated

circuit chips). As shown in Fig. 2, the CBP 50 is located inside of the SOC 10 on an IC chip (first set of buffers is located on the router integrated circuit chips). Further, as shown in Fig. 1, the external memory 12 is located off-chip (second set of buffers is located on memory chips separate from the router integrated circuit chips).

With respect to claims 3, 18, 33, and 41, Kadambi discloses in Fig. 2, a block diagram of a network switch for high performance switching in local area communications networks such as token ring, ATM, Ethernet, Fast Ethernet, and Gigabit Ethernet environments. Since it is an ATM switch therefore the off-chip memory GBP 60 storing information units received from all of the virtual channels (second set of buffers holds information units for a complete set of virtual channels).

With respect to claims 4, 19, 34, and 42, Kadambi discloses in Fig. 2 the CBP 50 is shared by all the ports (first set of buffer comprising a buffer pool shared by channels). Kadambi discloses (page 8, paragraph 109) that the free address pool within PMMU 70, Fig. 2, stores all free pointers for CBP 50. Each pointer in the free address pool points to a 64-byte cell in CBP 50 (a pointer array of pointers, associated with individual channels, to buffered information units).

With respect to claims 8-10, 23-25, 36-37, and 44, Kadambi, Ben-Michael and Brant have addressed all the claimed limitations recited in independent claim 1. Kadambi does not disclose flow control, such as blocking and/or credit-based, to stop the arrival of new information

Art Unit: 2667

units while transferring information units between the first set of buffers and second set of buffers. Ben-Michael discloses (col. 2, lines 10-11) that credit based flow control is used to control the amount of data transmitted by a source node so that there is always a buffer available in the destination node to hold the data. Further, Ben-Michael discloses (see Abstract) that data is transferred to the off-chip memory when the on-chip memory is full. This means, by employing the credit based flow control, the source will hold its data while the data packets stored on-chip memory is offloaded to the off-chip memory, since no credits are being returned upstream to notify the source that a buffer is available at the destination. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the flow control method in Kadambi's system, as suggested by Ben-Michael, to prevent the network from being congested when the on-chip memory of the received router is not available for accepting incoming data packets.

With respect to claims 11 and 26, Kadambi discloses (page 4, paragraphs 44-45, page 19, paragraphs 217-221, and Fig. 2) that the common buffer memory pool or CBP 50 is first level high speed SRAM memory, packet memory cache, for storing the received data packets and considered as on-chip data memory (a first set of rapidly accessible buffers, which store information units received at an input link). Further, Kadambi discloses that global memory buffer pool or GBP 60 acts as a second level memory and is located off-chip. Since, the GBP 60 is an off-chip memory therefore it is slower to access than the CBP 50 (a second set of buffers for the information units that are accessed more slowly than the first set). Kadambi does not disclose miss status registers to hold information units waiting for access to the second set of

Art Unit: 2667

buffers. Ben-Michael discloses in Fig. 7, FIFO bank 1, considered by the examiner as miss status registers, storing and holding data packs for transferring to the off-chip memory. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include intermediate registers in Kadambi's system, as suggested by Ben-Michael, to hold the data packets before the off-chip memory is ready to accept the received data packets.

With respect to claims 12 and 27, Kadambi discloses (page 4, paragraphs 44-45, page 19, paragraphs 217-221, and Fig. 2) that the common buffer memory pool or CBP 50 is first level high speed SRAM memory, packet memory cache, for storing the received data packets and considered as on-chip data memory (a first set of rapidly accessible buffers, which store information units received at an input link). Further, Kadambi discloses that global memory buffer pool or GBP 60 acts as a second level memory and is located off-chip. Since, the GBP 60 is an off-chip memory therefore it is slower to access than the CBP 50 (a second set of buffers for the information units that are accessed more slowly than the first set). Kadambi does not disclose an eviction buffer to hold entries staged for transfer from the first set of buffers to the second set of buffers. Ben-Michael discloses in Fig. 7, FIFO bank 1, considered by the examiner as an eviction buffer, storing and holding data packs for transferring to the off-chip memory. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the intermediate storage area in Kadambi's system, as suggested by Ben-Michael, to hold the data packets before the off-chip memory is ready to accept the received data packets.

With respect to claims 13 and 28, Kadambi discloses in Fig. 1, a forwarding element to be used in a local area communications networks (router is in a multi-computer interconnection network).

With respect to claims 14-15, 30, 38-39, and 45, Kadambi discloses in Fig. 2, the SOC is a forwarding element (router is a fabric router) and the received data packets are segmented into cells for storing and processing (information units are flits).

With respect to claims 50-53, Kadambi discloses in Fig. 2, the received data packets from the ports are stored in the CBP 50, processed and waited for its turn to transfer to the output port (means to arbitrate for plural information units to access an output channel).

3. Claims 5-7, 20-22, 35, and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Kadambi et al (US Pub No. 2002/0093974 A1) in view of Ben-Michael et al (EP O 886454A2) and in view of Brant et al (US Patent No. 5,805,787) and further in view of the admitted prior art disclosed in the specification, page 7, lines 15-17 and Fig. 4.

With respect to claims 5-7, 20-22, 35, and 43, Kadambi discloses in Fig. 2, a high performance self-balancing low cost network switching architecture based on distributed hierarchical shared memory. Kadambi does not disclose first set of buffer is organized as a set-associative cache; wherein each entry in the set associative cache contains a single information unit; and wherein each entry in the set associative cache contains buffers and state for an entire virtual channel. The admitted prior art disclosed in the specification, page 7, lines 15-17 and Fig.

Art Unit: 2667

4, a set-associative cache, wherein each flit buffer is assigned to a particular virtual channel and held the information units in the flit buffers 204 and 205. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the feature of organizing the CBP 50 as a set-associative cache, in Kadambi's system, as suggested by the admitted prior art, to efficiently manage the received data packets in the shared memory.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-28 and 30-53 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Van As et al (US Patent No. 5,901,140) discloses selective congestion control mechanism for information networks.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anh-Vu H Ly whose telephone number is 703-306-5675. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:00am - 4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chi Pham can be reached on 703-305-4378. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9314.

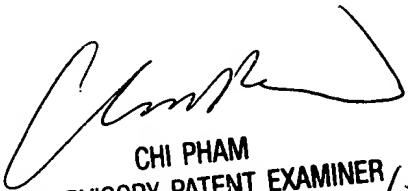
Application/Control Number: 09/316,699

Page 9

Art Unit: 2667

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-4750.

avl


CHI PHAM
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600 11/29/04